

But it made him no recluse in his Vendomois;
 he kept his
 place as courtier, as well as poet, in the
 Louvre of the last
 Valois. He never lost himself, or his touch on
 the pulse
 of life, in some Grasmere or Croisset or
 Farringford.

Even about Ronsard's cradle poetic
 traditions wreathed
 themselves. He himself believed his family
 derived from
 a romantic Balkan marquis.

fl a tir  sa race
 D'ou le glac  Danube est voisin de Thrace.

The country of Orpheus was certainly
 appropriate for a
 poet's ancestor. The marquis's elder son, we
 gather, came
 like the blind King of Bohemia to help France
 against the
 English in the Hundred Years War, and
 found there a
 new home. But research has made short
 work of this
 Rumanian marquis. Ronsard's real
 ancestors, as far as
 they can be traced, were simply country-
 gentlemen, with
 sometimes a turn for soldiering, of the Bas
 Venddmois.

But his father, Loys de Ronsart, was not
 merely a soldier;
 he was ofte who had seen Cinquecento Italy
 and fought
 beside Bayard. He was not only the man of
 action who
 had fed on rats in besieged Novara and
 borne a great part
 in the taking of Lodovico Sforza, Duke of
 Milan; who
 had won the Order of St. Michael at the
 overthrow of the
 Venetians under Bartolommeo Alviano and,
 as *maitre*
d'htitel des enfants de France, shared in the
 young princes'
 Spanish Captivity after Pavia; he was also a
 patron of the
 poet Jean Bouchet and a poet himself, whose

verses his
famous son was sometimes in after years to
quote and
whose theory of the value of alternate
masculine and
feminine rhymes that son was to make his
own.

There were adventurous memories too on
his mother's
side. Through her Poitevin family, nobler than
his father's,
he could claim distant kinsship with the
Plantagenets and
with that Elizabeth of England who was
one day to